

Columbus coins debut at discount

By Roger Boye

Unkle Sam has embarked on its Christopher Columbus coin program with a traditional sales tactic—pre-issue price discounts. Through Oct. 9, collectors can save \$30 on a three-coin proof set or \$25 on a three-coin uncirculated set. Prices also have been reduced on nine other sales options.

Under legislation passed by Congress last spring, the U.S. Mint will make three special coin types: a \$5 gold piece containing .24 of an ounce of gold, a dollar with .76 of an ounce of silver, and a copper-nickel half dollar. All three commemorate the 500th anniversary of Columbus' voyage to America.

Mint officials asked their engraving staff to create coin motifs because there wasn't enough time to conduct a national design competition.

Until Oct. 9, a proof half dollar costs \$8.50 (\$1 off the regular price), a proof silver dollar, \$27 (\$4 off), and a proof gold coin, \$190 (\$35 off). A three-coin proof set is \$220 (\$30 off), and a set of three uncirculated coins is \$205 (\$25 off). Other coin combinations also are available.

For more information or to place an order, call, toll-free, 1-800-845-5555, or write to the Customer Service Center, U. S. Mint, 10001 Aerospace Dr., Lanham, Md. 20706. Coin shipments are expected to begin in October and continue for several months.

It's doubtful that Uncle Sam will sell all the Columbus coins it is authorized to make because Congress set high mintage ceilings. In less than four weeks earlier this summer, the mint unloaded 500,000 White House silver dollars and declared a program sellout.